

Extending Long-Term Voluntary Service to Young People from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

The Experience of Three Flagship EVS Projects

This project is supported by the European Commission's YOUTH programme, as a large-scale 'Support Measure'. Support Measures are designed to assist the implementation of the YOUTH programme action lines (in this case the European Voluntary Service) and to contribute to the overall strengthening of European youth policy. This project will take place between July 2001 – July 2002.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this project is to promote long-term voluntary service as a possible means of intervention for young people faced with social exclusion. It also aims to facilitate their inclusion in long-term voluntary service in general, and the European Voluntary Service (EVS) in particular, by contributing to policy development.

The specific objectives of the project are therefore:-

- To evaluate, consolidate and promote the experience of 3 centralised EVS networks, set up in 1996 to test different approaches to the inclusion of disadvantaged youth in long-term voluntary service ;
- To evaluate the long term impact of these networks on the participating young people and organisations ;
- To identify and develop solutions to specific problems which limit the full integration of disadvantaged young people in EVS ;
- To increase the dialogue between organisations working at a centralised and decentralised level, and organisations working on long-term and short-term volunteering with this target group.

ACTIVITIES

The project has been divided into three main tasks :-

I Networks' Exchange & Manual of Best Practice

This manual aims to encourage dissemination and adaption of successful approaches tried and tested through the centralised networks. It will be based on the exchange of experience and best practice between 3 practitioners from each of the 3 networks, during 2 meetings in September and December 2001.

II Research Project

An independent research project will be carried out in parallel to the networks' exchange. It aims to gather supporting scientific evidence of the networks' long term impact on the young people themselves and the organisations involved. It will also look at the wider picture

of volunteering as a means of social inclusion within five European countries.

III Transfer of Experience

The manual and research results will form the basis for dialogue between centralised networks, National Agencies, and organisations interested in developing transnational voluntary service opportunities for disadvantaged young people. This will include meetings with, and/or presentations to, the National Agencies and other organisations, and an internet discussion forum.

BENEFICIARIES

The results of this project are expected to benefit the following groups :-

Policy makers at national and European level, particularly National Agencies and the European Commission engaged in developing a strategy on inclusion of disadvantaged youth, but also the wider policy community interested in the full spectrum of possible interventions for young people facing social exclusion.

Youth workers and hosting projects, especially those with little or no experience of working at a transnational level and hosting projects with little or no experience of this target group ;

The young people themselves, by promoting the real potential of this means of intervention among mainstream youth workers.

PROJECT PARTNERS

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